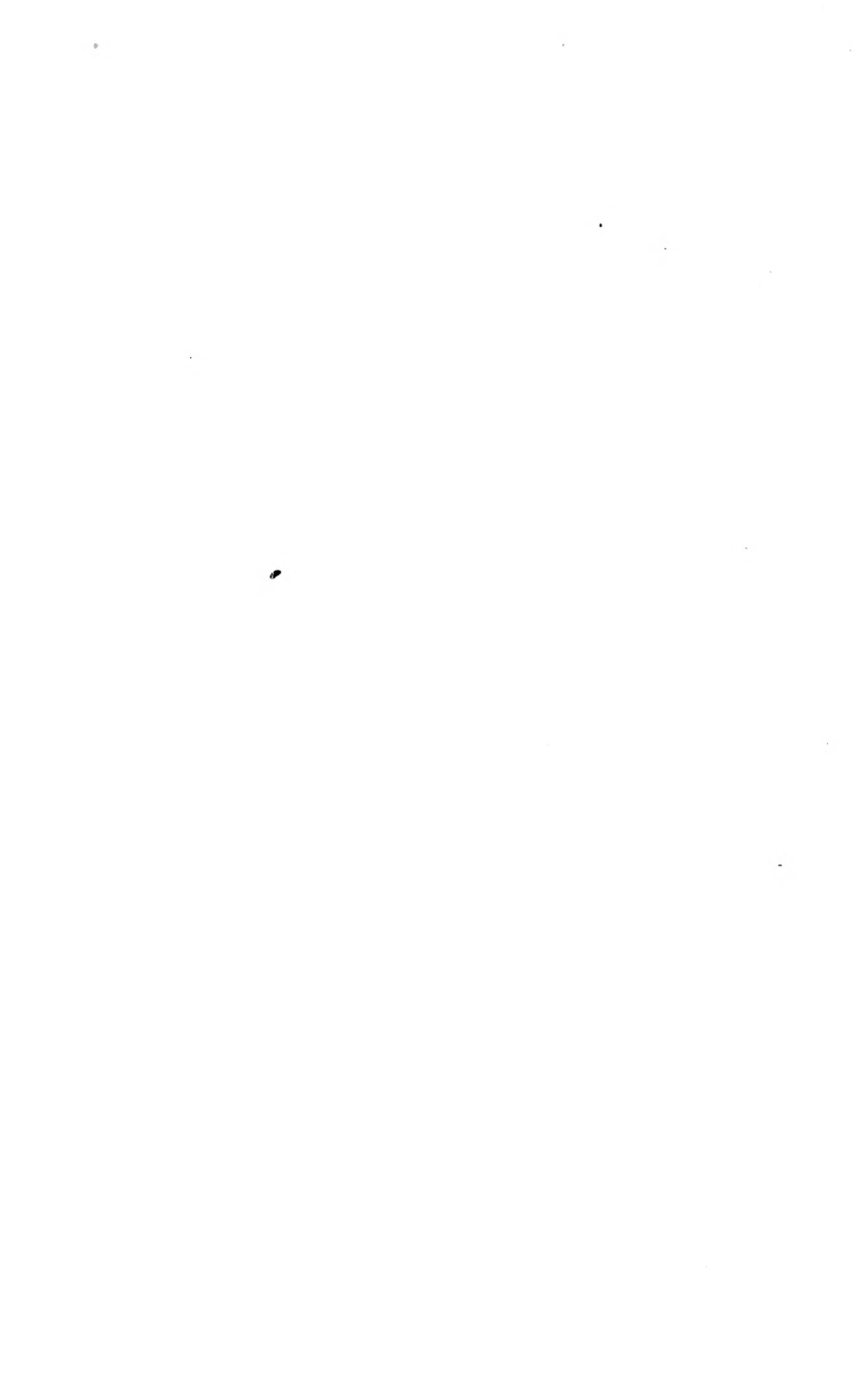


475

.81

.F97





THE REAL CHICKAMAUGA.

REPRINT OF ARTICLES BY W. S. FURAY, WAR CORRESPONDENT CINCINNATI GAZETTE, AND COL. G. C. KNIFFIN, CHIEF COMMISSARY TWENTY-FIRST CORPS, ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

(W. S. FURAY in Columbus State Journal, September, 1888.)

ORIGINAL WAR SKETCHES.

THE REAL CHICKAMAUGA.

We are rapidly approaching the anniversary of one of the most important battles of the war ; many of its survivors are still in the city ; and before some of them reach their homes that anniversary will have rolled around.

On September 19 and 20, 1863, was fought the awful battle of Chickamauga, in many respects the weirdest, wildest, fiercest conflict of all those that took place between the National and the Confederate armies. It was in the West as decisive in its way as Gettysburg in the East. If the latter put an end forever to the Confederate dream of Northern invasion, conquest, and plunder, the former extinguished the last rebel hope of overthrowing and destroying the Union army which in the central West was being driven into the very heart of the Confederacy, and which threatened it as vitally as poised spear held in stalwart hand ever threatened the life of an individual. Nashville, Vicksburg, New Orleans, Charleston, Knoxville, Williamsburg, were but outposts of the Confederate power. The successive fall of each marked an encouraging progress of the national arms but affected only incidentally and minutely the general result. The possession of neither of them either touched or

menaced a vital point. Even Richmond was but an outpost until the success of the Union armies in the center of the Confederacy left the legions of Lee once expelled from Richmond literally nowhere else to go. The campaign of Chickamauga was directed against a city which was the very key to the interior of the Confederacy, the crossing point of its greatest lines of railroad from all directions, the citadel of Georgia and the whole interior South. So long as Chattanooga remained in Confederate hands the enemy's power was practically unbroken, the great slave empire untouched.

General Loring, one of the most sagacious of all the officers that wore the gray, said to the writer of this article, near the close of the war and before he had heard of the surrender at Appomattox: "Our cause is probably lost, but your temporary victories up to the latter part of 1863 had little to do with it. Not a man in the Southern Confederacy felt that you had really accomplished anything until Chattanooga fell."

"You do not mean to say, general, that Vicksburg and Gettysburg were nothing?"

"The loss of Vicksburg," he replied, "weakened our prestige, contracted our territory, and practically expelled us from the Mississippi River, but it left the body of our power unharmed. As to Gettysburg, that was an experiment; if we had won that battle the government at Washington would, perhaps, have tendered peace with a recognition of the Confederacy. Our loss of it, except that we could less easily spare the slaughter of veteran soldiers than you could, left us just where we were."

"But in the latter part of 1863 some of your people lost hope?" I asked.

"Not exactly that," said he, "but they experienced then for the first time a diminution of confidence as to the final result."

"And may I ask what it was that occurred then which occasioned this change of feeling?"

"It was the fall of Chattanooga," he replied, "in consequence of the Chickamauga campaign, and the subsequent total defeat of General Bragg's efforts to recover it."

"Why did you regard Chattanooga as of such importance?" I asked.

"As long as we held it," he replied, "it was the closed doorway to the interior of our country. When it came into your hands the door stood open, and however rough your progress in the interior might be, it still left you free to

march inside. I tell you," continued he, with a vehemence which, in so modest and quiet a gentleman, greatly impressed me, "that when your Dutch General Rosecrans commenced his forward movement for the capture of Chattanooga we laughed him to scorn; we believed that the black brow of Lookout Mountain would frown him out of existence; that he would dash himself to pieces against the many and vast natural barriers that rise all around Chattanooga; and that then the Northern people and the government at Washington would perceive how hopeless were their efforts when they came to attack the *real* South."

"But the capture of Chattanooga convinced you that even the real South was vulnerable, did it?"

"Yes," said he, "it was then only a question as to whether we could beat back your armies by sheer force of desperate fighting, and as you largely outnumbered us and our resources were every day diminishing, the prospects to the thinking part of our people looked gloomy indeed."

"But, general," I said, "there are people in the North who regard the Chickamauga campaign as a failure for the Union arms."

"Ah!" he replied, "we would gladly have exchanged a dozen of our previous victories for that one failure."

This conversation took place in the month of April, 1865, on board a steamer bound to New Orleans, the day after the battle of Blakely, in which General Loring commanded the Confederate forces, and he and his entire force that survived the battle, rank and file, were made prisoners by the Union Army under General Canby. I had approached the distinguished prisoner, who, by the way, with a comparatively mere handful of men, had bravely held the approaches to Mobile against us for a good many days, had introduced myself as war correspondent of one of the leading journals of the North, and had asked him to give me the exact relative position of the different bodies of troops under his command in the battle of the previous day. This he very courteously did, and authorized me to make use of the information in the account of the battle which I was preparing while hastening northward to the home office.

Then I gave him the latest information I possessed as to the progress being made by Grant in Virginia and of the advance of Sherman through the Carolinas toward Richmond. It was upon this that he made the first remark in the conversation I have just detailed, and in which I mentally noted every word he said with an absorbing interest which the reader will readily understand.

Half an hour afterward I was seated flat on my haunches on the deck of the steamer, writing for dear life, when General Loring approached and accosted me.

"What are you writing now?" he inquired.

He had been so courteous under adverse circumstances to me, that I felt I could not be otherwise than entirely frank with him.

"I am writing out your remarks concerning the effect of the Chickamauga campaign," said I, "every word of which I well remember."

"It struck me," said he, "that you might be doing that. But I think you will see that the publication of those remarks while the war continues might be seriously misunderstood by my compatriots in arms, and might subject me to heavy censure. I did not intend them for publication, and regarded them as part of a private conversation we were having after the public portion was closed. I cannot take back the remarks now, and I have no power to prevent you from printing them. I can only ask you as a gentleman to withhold them from publication until the war is over."

It was a hard request to comply with. If the struggle were to go on, General Loring's views would make a sensation, and be a great encouragement to the loyal people of the land. I felt that in printing them I should make a big hit both as a journalist and a patriot. But with that courteous, sad-eyed, mild-mannered, and unfortunate gentleman standing over me, helpless as a prisoner of war who had given me his confidence, there was only one thing to do.

"Your wishes shall be respected, general," said I. "I shall finish my notes while our talk is fresh in my mind; but they will never see the light until I feel sure that their publication will discredit you with no one."

"Thank you," said he: "however the war may end, print what I said if you choose, and if you think it worth printing any time after the conflict is closed."

More than twenty-three years the notes of that conversation have remained in my hands, and they see the light for the first time to-day. I should probably never have given them to the press if the whole American people had done immediate justice to the noble Army of the Cumberland, which took and held Chattanooga at the awful cost of Chickamauga, and had given to the great soldier who led our army in that struggle the credit which his ability, his genius, his patriotism, his heroism, and his *success* demand. But strange, sad, and terrible as it may seem, a portion of our

people—I trust the number is small indeed—have persistently misunderstood the vast achievement which Rosecrans and the Army of the Cumberland accomplished during the Chickamauga campaign. Envy, jealousy, and malice threw a cloud over the achievement in the first place, took from Rosecrans the palm which justly belonged to him, and sent an order relieving him of command—an order that reached him while in that very citadel of Chattanooga, that vital point of the Southern Confederacy which his genius and the valor of his soldiers had wrested from the enemy's hands. It was the same malice, jealousy, and envy which afterward cast their evil eyes upon the great Thomas, and tried to relieve him also while he was literally annihilating the last Confederate army in the West. And so it has happened that a small portion of the American people have ever since labored under the cruelly false conception that in some way the campaign of Chickamauga was a failure, and that Rosecrans, who never lost a battle during his entire career, had in some way fallen short of the requirements of able generalship.

It is with the hope of contributing my mite toward removing this false impression that I have concluded to give this long-past conversation with General Loring to the public. It shows, as perhaps nothing else could so conclusively show, the impression made upon the Confederate mind by the battle of Chickamauga and the fall of Chattanooga. It shows that they knew what and who hurt them, even if we didn't know. I am all the more anxious to add my humble effort to those of others in doing full justice to "Old Rosey" and his gallant army, because I myself, writing more than twenty-five years ago an account of the battle of Chickamauga from notes that were taken amidst the very flame and thunder of that awful field, exaggerated somewhat the losses of the Union forces, and failed to give full credit to the all-knowing soldier who was able to look at all the aspects of the field, and after partial misfortune to build up a barrier which the enemy next day did not dare assail. I wrote even then with what seems to me a boundless appreciation of the valor of our army, but I failed duly to appreciate the fact that the prize for which the battle was fought, the city of Chattanooga, remained in our hands, making the whole campaign a wondrous triumph of genius, patience, strategy, energy, and skill, and the battle itself a victory decisive as that which compelled Lee to abandon Richmond.

Old soldiers of the Army of the Cumberland ! Let no one go unrebuked who denies your vast success in the campaign of Chickamauga. It was there that your valor and the generalship of your great commander loosened the foundations of the rebel confederacy and opened the door of the structure; and although awful work still remained in pulling that structure down, its fate, in the opinion of the most thoughtful Confederates themselves, was definitely sealed when Chickamauga gave you Chattanooga, and when, on the afternoon of September 21, General Bragg, advancing cautiously to view your new lines at Rossville, did not dare assail them.

W. S. FURAY.

[Cincinnati Commercial Gazette, Sept. 8, 1888.]

ON THE TENNESSEE.

ADDITIONAL FACTS ABOUT ROSECRANS' STRATEGIC MOVEMENTS IN TENNESSEE—WHY BURNSIDE FAILED TO EXECUTE HIS ORDERS TO JOIN "ROSEY"—PRESIDENT LINCOLN APPRECIATES THE SITUATION—HIS ORDER TO BURNSIDE—A MASTERLY, IMPARTIAL REVIEW OF THE TENNESSEE CAMPAIGN.

WASHINGTON, August 2, 1888.

To the Editor of the Commercial Gazette :

I have just finished reading General Boynton's vivid description of General Rosecrans's unparalleled strategic movement upon Chattanooga and its attendant battle of Chickamauga, and am more than impressed with a sense of the injustice inflicted upon him by the War Department.

Although the subject has been treated with such thoroughness as to leave nothing to add as regards the operations of the Army of the Cumberland, the failure of the Army of the Ohio to re-enforce General Rosecrans is a theme which may interest the student of the joint campaigns made by those armies. I leave to the Army of the Tennessee, the survivors of which have usually proved themselves equal to any emergency, to explain the inactivity of that army at a time when the appearance of even one corps at Rome, Ga., would have held back re-enforcements to Bragg's army from the South.

General Boynton says: "There had been time enough, after General Rosecrans's explanation of his proposed plan, to force Burnside with twenty thousand men down from East Tennessee, and to have brought all needed strength for the other flank from the Army of the Tennessee on the Mississippi."

Leaving to others to rise and explain why one hundred thousand men were permitted to be idle on the banks of the Mississippi while the Army of the Cumberland was engaged in a death grapple on Chickamauga Creek, not only with its old antagonist, but with Confederate troops withdrawn from the front of both Meade and Grant, I shall ask the attention of your readers while I quote from the record the dispatches that passed to and fro between the commander of the U. S. Army and his subordinates in command of the Army of the Ohio.

Weighed in the balance of common justice, at this distance from the scene of conflict, with all the strife, jealousy, and political enmity thrown out of the scales, it seems incredible that the commander of the army who won not only the objective point of his own campaign, but of the fruitless campaigns of his predecessor, was dishonored by his Government, while the commander of the other army in the joint campaign, who, by persistent disobedience of orders, placed in jeopardy the success of the expedition, was loaded with honors by the same Government.

The East Tennessee campaign of August and September, 1863, under the light of the record, embraces not only the movements of General Rosecrans, but to an equal extent those of General Burnside. The Army of the Ohio on duty in Kentucky consisted of the Ninth Corps, commanded by Major-General J. D. Park, and the Twenty-third Corps, under command of Major-General George L. Hartsuff. The first of these corps numbered, on August 30, "present for duty, equipped, 5,965; artillery, 208; total, 6,173. The Twenty-third Corps, composed of three divisions, numbered, infantry, 14,279; cavalry, 6,073; artillery, 1,468; total, 21,814. The first division of this corps, under command of General Boyle, 6,357 men of all arms, was required for duty in guarding various military posts in Kentucky, leaving the remainder, 15,457, for offensive operations. The total effective strength of both corps was 21,630. The advance into East Tennessee commenced August 20. General Hascall's division moved from Crab Orchard, crossing the Cumberland at Smith's Ford; General White's division crossed at Jamestown, the cavalry and mounted infantry, Generals Carter and Shackelford and Colonels Foster and Wolford, moving in advance of each column.

The two columns were ordered to concentrate after crossing the Cumberland Mountains near Huntsville, and move upon Montgomery, in East Tennessee. From there the movements, as Burnside telegraphed Halleck, would be "according to circumstances, but probably upon Kingston and London, *as these seem to be the places to which General Rosecrans desires us to go, in order to co-operate fully with him.* At all events, our final destination will be Knoxville. We have had very serious difficulty to contend with in bad roads and short forage; in fact, the country is about destitute. We shall have still greater difficulties in that way to overcome, but if Rosecrans *occupies the enemy fully* and no troops are allowed to come down the road from Richmond from the East-

ern army, I think we will be successful." The army arrived at Montgomery on the 1st of September, having encountered no opposition. There was nothing there to oppose it. General Carter's cavalry division moved thence in three columns, one under General Shackelford on Loudon Bridge, one under Colonel Byrd on Kingston, and one under Colonel Foster on Knoxville.

Major-General Buckner, in command of the Department of East Tennessee, had, in obedience to orders from the Confederate War Department, gathered up all his available force, with the exception of two thousand men under command of Brigadier General John B. Frazer, who was left in defense of Cumberland Gap, and a few isolated detachments at Knoxville and other places under command of Brigadier General Jackson, and formed a junction with Bragg's army at Chattanooga. Previous to leaving Knoxville, General Buckner wrote Major General Sam Jones, in command of the Department of West Virginia, requesting him to look after his department during his absence. Jones's headquarters were at Dublin, Va. He had his hands full taking care of Generals Averill and Scammon, who had on several occasions pushed their commands across the mountains from the north and the Kanawha Valley, and he was unable with troops at his command to do much besides look after his own department. In compliance with Buckner's request, however, he came down the road as far as Abingdon, when, on the 6th of September, he wrote General Frazer directing him to hold Cumberland Gap as long as possible, as re-enforcements were then on the way from the East. The long line extending from Staunton, Va., to the Salt-works, over two hundred miles, comprised in the Department of Western Virginia, rendered it out of the power of General Jones to re-enforce him with his own troops.

In compliance with his request, General Lee returned to him one of his own brigades, commanded by Brigadier General Wharton, which had been for several months on duty in the Army of Northern Virginia, and later another under command of Brigadier General Corse. General Jones's messenger reached General Frazer too late to prevent his surrender, and two thousand men were thus subtracted from the little force left to oppose the occupation of East Tennessee by the troops under General Burnside.

The following extract from the returns of the army of Western Virginia and East Tennessee will show the troops actually on duty in East Tennessee from the 16th of September, at which date the brigade last mentioned arrived:

INFANTRY BRIGADES.

Brigadier General Corse (sent by General Lee)—Fifteenth, Twenty-ninth, and Thirtieth Virginia.

Brigadier General Jackson (Buckner's corps)—Thomas's legion, Walker's battalion.

Brigadier General Wharton (at Salt-works)—Fifty-first Virginia, Thirtieth Virginia battalion, Forty-fifth Virginia.

CAVALRY BRIGADES.

Brigadier General W. E. Jones (made up from fragmentary commands)—Twenty-first Virginia Cavalry, Twenty-seventh, Thirty-fourth, Thirty-sixth, and Thirty-seventh Virginia Cavalry Battalions.

Brigadier General John S. Williams (one-half of them mounted)—Sixth-fourth Virginia Detached Cavalry, First Tennessee Cavalry, Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, May's Kentucky Cavalry Battalion, Tenth Kentucky Cavalry Battalion, Sixteenth Georgia Cavalry Battalion.

ARTILLERY.

J. Floyd King—Otey's Battery, Lowry's Battery, Ringgold's Battery, Davidson's Battery.

The effective total of the above command was, up to the 16th of September, about 4,000. Corse's brigade increased it to 5,180, and Wharton's brigade, 1,852 strong, was stationed at the Salt-works.

The force with which General Burnside confronted that of General Jones, above mentioned, was as follows.

Present for duty (equipped)—

TWENTY-THIRD ARMY CORPS.

Infantry.....	6,559
Mounted Infantry.....	3,123
Cavalry.....	3,436
Artillery.....	1,341
	<hr/>
	14,459

NINTH ARMY CORPS.

Infantry.....	6,222
Artillery.....	111

Total	20,792
-------------	--------

The cavalry expeditions from Montgomery were all successful. Kingston and Knoxville were taken without opposition, but at Loudon Bridge Buckner's rear guard was strongly posted. After a brisk skirmish they were driven back by Shackelford's command. The railroad bridge over

the Holston, a fine structure, had been saturated with turpentine, and the guard no sooner retreated across it than it was committed to the flames. Colonel Byrd captured at Kingston a steamboat in process of construction, and communicated with Colonel's Minty's pickets of General Rosecrans's army.

Leaving Byrd's brigade at Loudon, and White's division at Athens, General Burnside pushed the remainder of the Twenty-third Corps on to Knoxville. Buckner had left Knoxville, the day before Colonel Foster's arrival, leaving behind him a small force to guard a considerable quantity of quartermaster's stores, the Government work-shops and a large quantity of salt, which fell into Foster's hands. General Burnside reached the city on the 3d.

Major General Sam Jones, in command of the department of West Virginia, was directed by the Confederate War Department to extend a protectorate over the district of East Tennessee.

Arriving upon the scene of operations too late to prevent the surrender of Frazer at Cumberland Gap, he turned his attention to the formation of a command which should prevent the advance of Burnside's troops eastward, while by a show of force he should be able to hold his antagonist from participation in the struggle then impending near Chattanooga.

The value of the salt-works at Saltville, fourteen miles east of Abingdon, was inestimable to the Southern army. Their destruction would inflict an irreparable loss upon the Confederacy. Although the capture and destruction of those works seemed never to have entered the calculations of General Burnside or the War Department, the head of General Burnside's column had no sooner turned in that direction from Cumberland Gap than General Jones at once conjectured the objective point to be the precious salt-works, which it had been his especial duty to guard.

On the 14th the Union troops were reported to be moving from Cumberland Gap on the Salt-works. General Wharton was placed in command of the defenses and Otey's battery ordered to report to him. Majors Chenoweth and Prentice were ordered to send out scouts and ascertain the truth of the report. Colonel J. E. Carter, in command of the First Tennessee Cavalry Brigade, was directed to move via Reedy Creek and Moccasin Gap, and "if the enemy moves toward Saltville, get in his rear and harass him." It will be observed that the mind of General Jones had become impressed with two ideas, both of which were erroneous.

One, that General Burnside had but a portion of his force in East Tennessee, having sent the greater portion of his troops to co-operate with Rosecrans below Chattanooga ; the other, that General Burnside had designs upon the Salt-works. Both ideas were precisely those which would naturally occur to the mind of an intelligent antagonist, conversant with the importance of both movements, and that he was wrong in his surmises reflects less credit upon his antagonist than upon himself.

General Lee, whose mind embraced in its comprehensive grasp the operations of the Confederate army throughout the whole arena of war, and having little occupation along his front, had already responded to the call of General Bragg for re-enforcements by detaching one of his strongest corps, under Longstreet, for service at Chattanooga, and now finding the salt-works upon which his army depended threatened, he had promptly supplied to General Jones an additional brigade under command of Brigadier-General Corse. Wharton's brigade was encamped at Glade Springs, within supporting distance of the artillery in defense of the salt-works. Corse was brought to the front and preparations made to defend the line of road leading into the valley of the Upper Tennessee, and if possible prevent Burnside from advancing upon the salt-works and also from detaching any considerable portion of his force to re-enforce Rosecrans.

In response to a telegram from President Davis, asking the strength and position of his forces, General Jones replied as follows :

“JONESBORO, *September 15, 1863.*

“*His Excellency Jefferson Davis, Richmond, Va. :*

“Your telegram of yesterday received last night. I shall withdraw the troops from this to the Watauga and Holston to await the re-enforcements and be in better position to meet an advance on Saltville. No reliable information of the movements of the enemy from Cumberland Gap. Pickets skirmishing in front every day; our pickets behaving well.

“SAM JONES, *Major-General.*”

General Jones says in his report:

“Under all the circumstances of the case I thought the best service I could render with the small force under my command would be to check and detain the superior force in my front until the battle which I supposed was impending near Chattanooga should be decided.”

The following telegrams were sent by Rosecrans to Halleck :

“TRENTON, GA., *September 7—Midnight.*

“Your dispatch yesterday received with surprise. You have been often and fully advised that the nature of the country makes it impossible for this army to prevent Johnston from combining with Bragg. When orders for an advance of this army were made it must have been known that those two rebel forces would combine against it, and to some extent choose their place for fighting us. This has doubtless been done, and Buckner, Johnston, and Bragg are all near Chattanooga. The movement on East Tennessee was independent of mine. Your apprehensions are just and the legitimate consequences of your orders. The best that can now be done is for Burnside to close his cavalry down on our left, supporting it with his infantry.”

“CHATTANOOGA, 12.15 P. M., *September 12.*

“I think it would be very unwise for General Burnside, in present attitude of affairs, to make any move in the direction of North Carolina. It would leave my left flank entirely unprotected all the way into Kentucky. All forces should be concentrated in this direction. I trust I am sufficient for the enemy now in my front, but should he fall back to the line of the Coosa the roads from there are short and comparatively good to the Tennessee, while it is necessary for me to cross two ranges of mountains over very narrow, rough, and difficult roads to reach Tennessee, and thence move from thirty to fifty miles to reach the flank of a column moving from Gunter’s Landing, or Whitesburg, on Nashville. It is desirable to have the avenue shut up. Can not you send a force from the army to do it?”

On the 9th of September Burnside telegraphed Halleck from Knoxville:

“My forces in East Tennessee are now distributed as follows: A division of infantry at Loudon, with a mounted brigade in the direction of Athens.” * * *

And on the 17th:

“In my last dispatch I told you of a force I have at Loudon and Athens, the advance connecting with Rosecrans. It will be left as it was there, *and the remainder of our force concentrated at Greenville.*”

The General of the Army appears to have been equally unsuccessful in procuring re-enforcements from the Army of the Tennessee, which had been for two months resting upon the laurels of Vicksburg, while their paroled prisoners were flocking to the standard of Bragg.

He received the following dispatch from Rosecrans, dated Chattanooga, September 12, 1863:

"Hurlbut dispatches that the country south of Corinth is full of irregular cavalry. He is induced to believe that a general movement of all the available force of the enemy is being made on this army. Hurlbut ought to cover that flank. It is reported from several sources that even Loring's division has been moved up and is at Atlanta.

"Burnside ought to send his infantry down in this direction. The enemy has concentrated at Lafayette, and has attacked one of Thomas's columns in the Chickamauga valley, west of Dug Gap, compelling it to fall back to Stevens's Gap."

And on the 13th he telegraphed:

"To Generals Grant or Sherman, Vicksburg :

"It is quite possible that Bragg and Johnston will move through Alabama and Tennessee to turn Rosecrans's right and cut off communication. All of Grant's available forces should be sent to Memphis, thence to Corinth and Tusculumbia, to co-operate with Rosecrans should the rebels attempt that movement."

The same dispatch was sent to Hurlbut, at Memphis, and again September 14:

"There are good reasons why troops should be sent to assist Rosecrans's right with all possible dispatch. Communicate with Sherman to assist you and hurry forward reinforcements as previously directed."

On the 9th of September General Burnside reported the capture of Cumberland Gap and two thousand prisoners and the occupation of East Tennessee from Jonesboro on the northeast to Athens in the southwest. To this report General Halleck responded on the 11th, congratulating him upon his success, directing him to hold the gaps in the North Carolina mountains, and to connect with General Rosecrans, at least with his cavalry, notifying him that the latter would occupy Dalton or some point on the railroad, to close all access from Atlanta. On the 13th Halleck telegraphed Burnside as follows :

"It is important that all the available forces of your command be pushed forward into East Tennessee. All your scattered forces should be concentrated there. So long as we hold Tennessee, Kentucky is perfectly safe. *Move down your infantry as rapidly as possible towards Chattanooga to connect with Rosecrans.* Bragg may merely hold the passes in the mountains to cover Atlanta, and move his main army through

Northern Alabama to reach the Tennessee River and turn Rosecrans's right, cutting off his supplies. In that case he will turn Chattanooga over to you and move to intercept Bragg."

Here is a positive order, as explicit as any given to Rosecrans, for Burnside to move his infantry down toward Chattanooga to connect with Rosecrans. The same order had been given on the 5th of August and had formed a part of the plan of expedition. It was reiterated on the 5th of September, when he was directed to keep Rosecrans informed of his movements and arrange with him for co-operation. On September 11, when he was notified of Rosecrans's position and need of re-enforcements, and again on the 13th, as seen in the above dispatch, he had in Tennessee a division of cavalry and mounted infantry whose effective strength, as shown by the field returns of September 20, was: "Present for duty, equipped, 6,700, with thirty-four pieces of artillery." His infantry and artillery under Hartsuff numbered: "Present for duty, equipped, 6,586, with thirty-two pieces of artillery." One has but to imagine the grand results of the Chattanooga campaign if these orders had been obeyed.

Burnside entered Knoxville with an army of ten thousand men on the 6th of September, leaving a division of infantry and a brigade of cavalry and mounted infantry at London and Athens. He found supplies abundant, besides which he had crossed the mountains with two thousand beef cattle. His advance, under Foster, captured at Knoxville five locomotives, over twenty cars, and a large quantity of provisions. After capturing the force and subsistence stores at Cumberland Gap and opening the route to and from Kentucky, and arming the East Tennesseans with five thousand stand of arms brought with him for that purpose, he had ample time and opportunity in which to have dispatched at least ten thousand troops to report for duty to General Rosecrans. On the 18th he acknowledged the receipt of Halleck's dispatch of the 13th, above quoted, and also of one dated on the 14th, which read as follows: "There are reasons why you should re-enforce General Rosecrans with all possible dispatch. It is believed the enemy will concentrate to give him battle. You must be there to help him." To this urgent appeal he replied on the 18th from Knoxville: "Orders to go below will be obeyed as soon as possible. I go to Greenville to-night (in the opposite direction). Dispositions for attacking the enemy at Jonesboro' made. I will lose no time in doing as you order. No direct telegraphic communication as yet. Hope to get it to-morrow."

The next day, while Rosecrans, after the brilliant flank movement which compelled the evacuation of Chattanooga,

found his army on the eve of a terrible battle, Burnside telegraphed from Greenville: "Will obey your directions in reference to Rosecrans. Our troops occupy Jonesboro'. Enemy retiring to Abingdon. Our cavalry in pursuit. Am now sending every man that can be spared to aid Rosecrans. *I shall go on to Jonesboro'*. As soon as I learn the result of our movements to the east will go down by railroad and direct the movements of re-enforcements for Rosecrans. I have directed every available man in Kentucky to be sent here."

On the 20th he received a dispatch from Halleck stating that General Meade did not believe that any of Ewell's troops had gone west, as Burnside had feared; that Longstreet, Johnston, and Bragg had concentrated against Rosecrans, who was on the Chickamauga River, twenty miles south of Chattanooga, closing thus: "He is expecting a battle and wants you to sustain his left. Every possible effort must be made to assist him." To this Burnside replied from Knoxville on the 20th: "You may be sure I will do all I can for Rosecrans. Arrived here last night and am hurrying troops in his direction. *I go up the road to-night for a day.*"

The following dispatch received by Rosecrans on the battlefield on the 19th, and that which follows on the 20th, shows that Halleck fully expected a junction of the two armies: "I have no direct communication with Burnside or Hurlbut. On the 15th Hurlbut says he is moving toward Decatur. I hear nothing of Sherman's troops ordered from Vicksburg. A telegram from Burnside on the 17th, just received, says my orders to move down to re-enforce you will be obeyed as soon as possible. * * * Burnside's cavalry ought to be near you by this time." That on the 20th is as follows: "General Burnside's instructions before he left Kentucky were to connect with your left. These instructions have been repeated five or six times, and he has answered that he was moving with that object. I think his advance cannot be far from you." On the 21st: "Nothing heard from Burnside since the 19th. He was then sending to your aid all his available force. It is hoped that you will hold out until he reaches you. He was directed to connect with you ten days ago. I can get no reply from Hurlbut or Sherman."

So the correspondence went on from day to day, and not a man was sent to Rosecrans. The battle of Chickamauga was fought on the 19th and 20th. The noble Army of the Cumberland, struggling against terrible odds, held its position even after the fatal blunder, as shown by General Boynton, which opened its lines and admitted Longstreet's victorious legions upon its flanks. Obedience to the positive order of General Halleck would have brought the infantry of the Twenty-third Corps upon the field in ample time to

retrieve the disaster, if not to have prevented it. The force that required only a small portion of Burnside's troops to drive back from Knoxville to Jonesboro', and which virtually prevented the co-operation of Burnside with Rosecrans, has been already stated. This is how Burnside states it in his dispatch to Halleck of the 21st of September: "Before I knew of the necessity of sending immediate assistance to General Rosecrans I had sent a considerable portion of my force to capture and drive out a large force of the enemy under General Sam Jones, stationed on the road from Bristol to Jonesboro, which amounts to *six thousand men.*"

The student of these campaigns cannot fail to be impressed with the folly of the War Department in attempting to direct the management of two separate armies, operating upon parallel lines eastward from their respective bases, by telegraph, from a point a thousand miles distant, without giving to one commander extraordinary powers in case of emergency. The misfortune that attended the Army of the Cumberland could have been arrested if Burnside had remained in Cincinnati, sending Hartsuff into East Tennessee. Burnside's commission ante-dated that of Rosecrans as major-general *three days*, and for this reason the latter could not order the Army of the Ohio to his assistance. General Burnside told Hartsuff that he could not go to Chattanooga, as he ranked Rosecrans, and confusion might arise. To which Hartsuff replied: "Let me go; I don't rank him."

General Burnside, however, explains his action in the same report, as follows:

"It should be remembered that up to the night of the 16th I was acting under instructions to occupy the upper country of East Tennessee, and all of my available forces were well up the valley above Knoxville. All that could be turned back were started at once, and as soon as possible the remainder were withdrawn from the presence of the enemy and turned back for the purpose of proceeding to the relief of General Rosecrans.

"The point where the troops were turned back on the 17th was 140 miles from Chickamauga, where General Rosecrans was fighting on the 19th, and the advance of our forces was over two hundred miles distant therefrom. It will be readily seen that under no circumstances could we have reached even the neighborhood of General Rosecrans's forces during that battle. The troops were moved in that direction as rapidly as possible. Many dispatches passed between General Halleck and myself after this in reference to going to Rosecrans' assistance after he had established himself at Chattanooga, and some misunderstandings occurred in regard to the purport of these dispatches. I was averse to doing what would

in any way weaken our hold in East Tennessee, and he was anxious lest Rosecrans should not be able to hold Chattanooga, and we held our ground in East Tennessee, so that what occurred in no way affected the result."

Halleck was kept fully advised of the movements of Rosecrans. The perilous position of his unprotected flanks was pointed out while pushing his army vigorously forward toward the enemy. The following dispatches announced the results of both days' fighting, and are the only dispatches sent by Rosecrans during the battle, or from September 18 to 22:

"CRAWFISH SPRINGS, *September 18, 1863.*

"Everything indicates that the enemy is determined to make every effort to overthrow this army. What we most need is to have our flanks well covered. You do not say how soon Hurlbut is to move. Please advise me what orders he has received, and from whence he is to draw subsistence.

"Even a movement in Tuscumbia Valley would be of great importance at this time.

"Enemy demonstrating on our front now. We occupy line of West Chickamauga.

"Our cavalry on right covers Stevens's Gap."

"CHICKAMAUGA, *September 19, 1863.*

"We have just concluded a terrific day's fighting, and have another in prospect for to-morrow. The enemy attempted to turn our left, but his design was anticipated, and a sufficient force placed there to render his design abortive. The battleground was densely wooded and its surface irregular and difficult. We could make but little use of our artillery. The number of our killed is inconsiderable; that of our wounded very heavy. The enemy is greatly our superior in numbers. Among our prisoners are members of some thirty regiments. We have taken ten cannon and lost seven. The army is in excellent condition and spirits, and by the blessing of Providence the defeat of the enemy will be total to-morrow."

CHATTANOOGA, *September 20, 1863—5 P. M.*

"We have met with a serious disaster; enemy overwhelmed us, drove our right, pierced our center, and scattered troops there. Thomas, who had seven divisions, remained intact at last news. Granger, with two brigades, had gone to support Thomas on the left. Every available reserve was used when the men were stampeded. Burnside will be notified of the state of things at once and you will be informed. Troops from Charleston, Florida, Virginia, and all along the seaboard are among the prisoners. It seems that every available man was thrown against us."

“CHATTANOOGA, *September 22, 1863.*

“We have fought a most sanguinary battle against vastly superior numbers. Longstreet is here and probably Ewell, and a force is coming from Charleston. We have suffered terribly, but have inflicted equal injury upon the enemy. The mass of this army is intact and in good spirits. Disaster not as great as I anticipated. We held our position in the main up to Sunday night. Retired on Rossville, which we held yesterday, then retired on Chattanooga. Our position is a good one. Think we can hold out several days, and, if re-enforcements come up soon, everything will come out all right. Our transportation is mainly across the river. Have one bridge, another will be done to-day. Our cavalry will be concentrated on the west side of the river to guard it on our left. Will be compelled to abandon south side of river below this point.”

LINCOLN TO ROSECRANS.

“WASHINGTON, *September 21, 1863.*

“*General Rosecrans, Chattanooga:*

“Be of good cheer. We have unabated confidence in you and your soldiers and officers. In the main you must be the judge of what is to be done. If I were to suggest I would say save your army by taking strong positions until Burnside joins you, when I hope you can turn the tide. I think you had better send a courier to Burnside to hurry him up; we cannot reach him by telegraph. We suppose some force is going your way by Corinth, but for want of communication we do not know how they are getting along. We shall do all we can to assist you. A. LINCOLN.”

LINCOLN AND BURNSIDE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *September 21, 1863.*

General Burnside, Knoxville, Tenn.:

Go to Rosecrans with your force without a moment's delay.

A. LINCOLN.

What influences were afterwards brought to bear upon the mind of the President to induce him to consent to the removal of General Rosecrans from the command of the army that he had thrice led to victory will never be known. The conspirators are dead, and the malice, jealousy, and political animosity of the time have passed away, buried, let us hope, with the sectional hatred that gave rise to these events.

Having advanced in obedience to peremptory orders, as shown by General Boynton, with no corresponding orders for the support of his flanks, Rosecrans was permitted to cross a navigable river and two mountain ranges and fight a battle beyond the reach of succor in case of disaster.

It has been shown that when the result of this reckless folly dawned upon the mind of General Halleck he made haste to repair his error by ordering support from the armies on the right and left.

It is equally plain that the commanders of both armies felt themselves sure of immunity from censure from the War Department by disobedience of the orders of the General of the Army.

A corps commander had been dismissed the army for a similar offense.

Regarding the two campaigns as one in their objects, and the two armies as but the right and left wings of a grand army of invasion of Confederate territory moving on parallel lines, under a common commander, it is reasonable to suppose that re-enforcements from right to left would have been made as occasion demanded. The Confederates regarded the destruction of the Army of the Cumberland as of paramount importance, and boldly massed an army in its front of sufficient magnitude, in their opinion, to accomplish that object. The temporary evacuation of Chattanooga southward was rendered necessary by the strategical movement of a large portion of General Rosecrans's army upon Bragg's communications, but the feeling in the Confederate army was an unwavering faith in their success. This feeling was shared by the people at large. Hundreds of families who had left their homes in Middle Tennessee and Kentucky, and kept in the rear of the Confederate army in its retrograde movement, were congregated at Rome, Georgia.

They had led a nomadic life, moving from Murfreesboro' to Winchester, thence to Chattanooga and Rome, and inspired with a hope of returning to their homes as a result of the defeat and pursuit of the Army of the Cumberland, they had their goods and baggage packed in wagons ready to follow the victorious flag of the Confederacy northward to the Cumberland. The fancy of many took a wilder flight.

Knowing that Rosecrans's army alone stood between the powerful host of veteran troops concentrating at Lafayette and the Ohio River, it was not too much to hope that a vigorous pursuit of a disorganized army, demoralized by defeat, would carry the war into the Northern States.

That they were disappointed in their expeditions was due not less to the pluck and endurance of the magnificent Army of the Cumberland than to the brilliant combination of courage and zeal of its commander, who manœvered Bragg out of his stronghold and fought him in the open field.

G. C. KNIFFIN,

Lt.-Col. Staff, A. C.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 702 428 7